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# New York Termed 'Hub Of Foreign Spies in U.S.

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From the Soviet residence in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, where rooftop equipment permits surveillance of telephones throughout the Northeast, to Russian émigré communities in Brooklyn, where the Federal Bureau of Investigation fears that "sleeper" Soviet agents live in disguise, American and Russian agents are fighting each other for information.

Largely because New York City is the home of the United Nations and its many delegates, but also because of its pre-eminence as a business capital in an age when manufacturing advance represent the secrets many foreign government are most eager to share in, the city is the focus of international espionage efforts.

According to the F.B.I., for example, even its own telephones are subject to eavesdropping by Soviet agents. Its own intelligence activities have made the bureau aware of that danger. Every telephone in the bureau's foreign-counterintelligence section is therefore marked with a sticker warning that it is "not secure." And for sensitive communication, agents use a separate, special scrambler phone that requires a different code each day from the National Security Agency in Maryland.

Understandably, perhaps, espionage is a subject that bureau officials have not discussed often in public. In addition to security reasons for keeping silent, they are subject to criticism both for laxity and for overzealousness. But in a recent series of interviews, the F.B.I.'s foreign counterintelligence experts in New York described some of their methods of operation, their efforts to stymie espionage by other countries and the importance of New York City as a spying center.

While F.B.I. accounts of intelligence activities cannot be substantiated in most respects because of their secret nature, the agency's descriptions offer a revealing look at what it says are its activities in intelligence-gathering.

According to Donald J. McGorty, the special agent in charge of the bureau's Sino-Satellite foreign counterintelligence section — which focuses on every country but the Soviet Union — New York is actually "the largest base for foreign intelligence-gathering."

"New York is the hub," he said. "There are many more diplomats here than anywhere else — even Washington.

Even countries with whom we do not have diplomatic relations and who have no embassies have missions at the United Nations. And anywhere these people have establishments, there's an opportunity for espionage."

Not all the spying in the city, however, is actually directed at the United States, Mr. McGorty said. Some of it constitutes "third-country recruitment" — the development of a Libyan spy, for example, by Soviet agents here. The United Nations makes the city a prime location for such enlistment.

## Targets of U.S. Agents

Agents in the Sino-Satellite section devote most of their attention to representatives of 20 so-called "criteria countries," designated as top priorities. Under guidelines from the Attorney General, Mr. McGorty said, the bureau needs no specific information or suspicious move to touch off an investigation of a criteria country's actions, but it must be able to present "specific and articulable facts" to support arguments for inquiries into noncriteria countries.

He declined to name all of the target countries, but said they included Libya, Communist-bloc countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization. He added that more than 2,000 officials of criteria countries either worked or lived in New York City.

R. Jean Gray, the special agent in charge of Soviet counterintelligence, said that among more than 600 people the Russians have working in New York, 110 have diplomatic immunity, which extends to their spouses.

"About 35 percent of the people with immunity are suspected to be officers of Soviet intelligence services," Mr. Gray said. "Experience has indicated that among the remainder, a significant percentage are also members of Soviet intelligence services or are co-opted to carry out tasks for those services from time to time."

## F.B.I. Has 300 on the Case

By contrast, the bureau has more than 300 agents assigned to foreign counterintelligence in New York, many less than it had at the height of the Cold War. With détente, the ranks were reduced, but in the past five or six years, chilling trends led to the adding of personnel.

scope of his stated diplomatic functions.

"We have to find out who the players are before they play ball," Mr. McGorty said. The easiest way to accomplish that, he added, is to "get one of them to work for us so we'll know what they're up to." The prime recruits are intelligence agents from target countries, but the job of enlisting them is not easy.

An initial approach, Mr. McGorty said, is generally disguised as simple friendliness. Bureau agents (who are not allowed to operate outside the United States and cannot enter the gates of the United Nations) pose as lawyers or accountants while hobnobbing in the bars and restaurants frequented by representatives of other countries. Overtures are gradual, while agents work at cultivating confidence.

## Shopping in Supermarkets

In some cases, he said, female F.B.I. agents are dispatched to supermarkets or beauty parlors used by a target's wife to enlist the woman's help in influencing her husband to shift his sympathies.

Making contact with Soviet targets has become particularly difficult since the opening of their residential complex in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, Mr. Gray said.

"They travel in by special bus from Riverdale together every morning and go back there together every night," he said. "At lunch, they eat in the cafeteria at the Soviet Mission. They don't have a lot of pocket money. You don't find them carousing around town."

Besides having to evaluate whether Soviet employees are really serving a legal function in New York, the bureau has also faced a problem in discerning whether spies are being slipped in among the 400 Soviet émigrés who arrive in the country each month.

## May Become Taxi Drivers

"It used to be they would take a name from a tombstone in Michigan or someplace of someone who died at the age of 2 and write for a birth certificate and spend years creating a false identity," Mr. Gray said. "Now all they have to do is send him in as a Soviet émigré. An illegal may come in and spend five years driving a taxi, but then be called into action."

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